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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 001313

SIPDIS

STATE PASS AF/C (WOLPE, KEITH, LAMORA AND CASEY), AF/W  
(HUNTER) AND EUR/WE (MARCUS)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/30/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOG](#) [CG](#) [RW](#) [BE](#)

SUBJECT: BELGIAN MFA HINTS AT POSITIONS PRIOR TO GLCG

Classified By: Political Economic Counselor Richard Eason for reasons 1  
.4 (B) and (D).

11. (C) Belgian Congo Desk Officer Hugues Chantry and Rwanda/Burundi Desk Officer Stephane Doppagne shared some Belgian ideas on Great Lakes issues with Poloff September 29. The topics discussed provided some insight into what the GOB might present at the Great Lakes Contact Group (GLCG) in Washington October 14. The Belgians offered several points on Congo: they want to discuss a new architecture for international community - DRC interaction; they will be more cautious in their open criticism of the GoDRC; and they are moving towards a measured approach to security sector reform (SSR). Our contacts also expressed concern with the political situation in Rwanda. Finally, they asked for the U.S. reaction to the recent violence in Conakry, Guinea, and wondered if the U.S. would take any action.

Congo

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12. (C) Chantry said the MFA was looking forward to the October 14 Great Lakes Contact Group meeting in Washington; he was hoping he would receive the agenda soon. He said Belgium was less keen on a Canadian suggestion to have a meeting of the Group of Friends of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in New York the following day; Chantry confided that his Ministry did not find the organization particularly useful. Poloff asked Chantry if Belgium will have completed its Africa policy review prior to the GLCG meeting. Chantry replied in the affirmative and said Belgium hoped to discuss a new architecture for the international community to engage with the DRC at the meeting. He said the GOB would try to adjust its tone to be less critical of the DRC publicly, as maintaining open diplomatic relations is a priority. On SSR, Chantry said Belgium would take a realistic and measured approach moving forward in stages. Rather than rolling out four or five point plans and moving on a predetermined timeline, the Belgians plan to move from one stage to a more advanced level only if the DRC is prepared and has completed the goals of the first stage; Belgium is willing to wait. Finally, the Belgian parliament continues to question FM Leterme on sexual violence in the Congo; he was recently asked what the United States was doing and how the GOB was working with the USG.

Rwanda

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13. (C) Chantry said Belgium was becoming more concerned with the political situation in Rwanda. He said that Kagame seems

skilled and that Rwanda had learned good public relations skills from the Blair government in the UK, but compared the actual situation to a Potemkin village. He thinks the Kagame regime's avoidance of the Tutsi-Hutu problem will lead to another inter-ethnic calamity. He said Belgium would seek joint messaging with partners to urge changes in Kigali.

Guinea

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¶4. (C) Doppagne asked if the U.S. had made any statement about the recent massacre in Conakry in which soldiers fired into an opposition rally, killing around 90 people. He said he would appreciate the U.S. perspective and reaction.

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